

Joseph R. SMALLWOOD


Biographical Information

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# Newfoundland Retires Premier of 22 Years

By JAY WALZ

Special to The New York Times

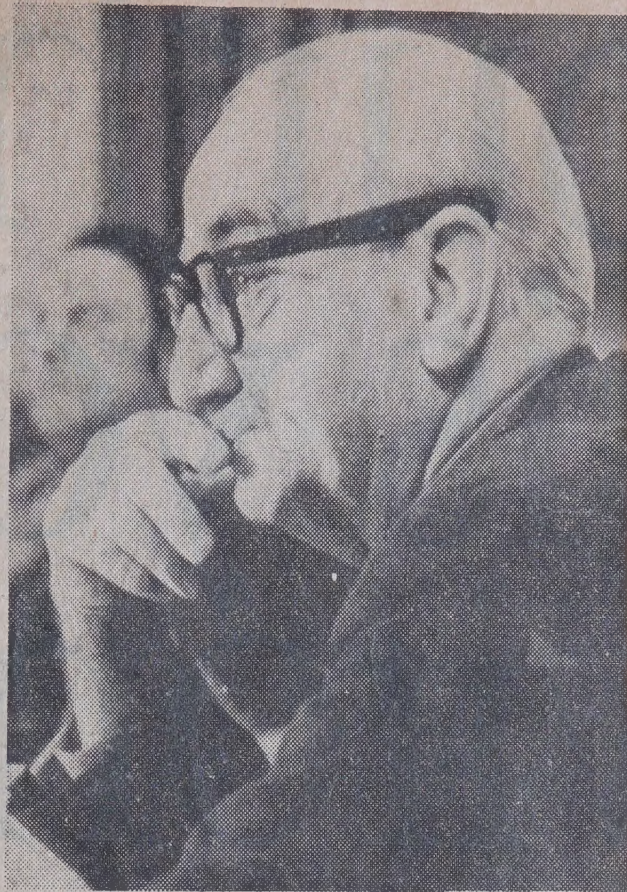
ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland, Jan. 15—The man chiefly responsible for bringing the British colony of Newfoundland into Canada 22 years ago is being retired at 71. But Joseph R. Smallwood, the only Premier Canada's 10th province has ever had, proved this week that he is not a retiring man.

The Smallwood Liberals lost a close election to the Conservatives nearly three months ago. But not until Thursday did Mr. Smallwood concede defeat and announce his "intention" to resign—perhaps "next Monday or Tuesday."

Mr. Smallwood, after six straight victories, challenged the election results with calls for a half-dozen recounts and with court procedures. His ultimate defeat was a Supreme Court ruling early this week that the burning of a box of ballots in the little outport of Sally Cove had not invalidated the eight-vote victory of a Conservative candidate for a seat in the House of Assembly. Another court had already ruled that the destruction of 105 ballots was the innocent act of a local election official who said that she always burned ballots after counting them to prevent overcurious neighbors from checking on them. Mr. Smallwood vainly asked the high court to void the district election, since an official recount was impossible.

## Lost by One Seat

Mr. Smallwood, while yielding to the justices, fired a parting shot. "I am quite convinced the Liberal won the district," he told reporters. "The Conservative was put there by the Supreme Court, not by the voters." The Liberal candidate was Trevor Bennett and the



United Press International

Premier Joseph R. Smallwood conceding defeat Thursday

Conservative victor was Edward Maynard.

Thus all the recounts and court proceedings changed nothing in the election results. The Liberals held only 20 seats in the 42-seat Assembly, while the Conservatives, heretofore a minority, had 21. The Tories clinched victory when a Liberal who defected to form the New Labrador party, won a seat and announced he would support the Conservatives.

If Mr. Smallwood carries out his "intention," he will vacate his office early next week to make way for the new Premier, Frank Moores, 38 years old, a former fish merchant who promises to "end one-man rule" and make parliamentary government a reality for the 500,000 Newfoundland maritimers.

Even Mr. Moore's well-wishers say this may be a reform too difficult to achieve on short order. Mr. Smallwood has been Premier since 1949, and Newfoundlanders have grown accustomed to "going to Joey" about everything from a poor herring catch to the need for a road. "Joey would pick up the phone to help a luckless fisherman get a job cutting wood," one admirer said this week.

Figures obtained from Statistics Canada, the federal tabulating agency, show that more than half of the economy of Newfoundland is based on federal expenditures — public works, pensions, family assistance (children's allowances) and equalization payments under a program requiring "have" provinces — Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia—to help the "have-nots" — including Newfoundland.

All the progress notwithstanding, Mr. Smallwood says

his province stands in an ever-present danger. "For 500 years our people cultivated the Atlantic Ocean," he said in an interview. "There are no green fields to show for our work. We've made no dent on the countryside."

"Joey's province," as Newfoundland has often been called, is Canada's most eastern region. It is mostly wilderness, but it is blessed with a 6,000-mile coastline with indentations providing deep harbors. St. John's is closer to London than it is to many points in western Canada. This geographical position, Mr. Smallwood argues, makes Newfoundland a great intercontinental crossroads. But jet airliners do not land at the province's once important airports of Gander and Goose Bay.

"We are a land of many hundreds of little settlements on the shoreline—as close as possible to the fish," he said. "Now these fishermen are losing out to the big foreign ships off our coast—Russians, Japanese, Germans, British, Portuguese and Americans, all using the big modern facilities our people cannot afford."

Mr. Smallwood undertook a controversial resettlement program that has reduced the number of these tiny outposts from 1,300 to 980.

That is why, Mr. Smallwood explained, he has gone after food-processing plants, pulp and food processing plants, pulp and paper mills, shipyards—to "de-

It is known, also, that Mr. Smallwood could use his phone to make multimillion-dollar arrangements in New York, London or Bonn for huge projects to develop the province's water power, minerals, forests and fish.

## 'Joey's Deals' Criticized

Critics said that "Joey's deals," involving guarantees to investors, were impoverishing the province, while benefitting the outside capitalists.

Through the years, Mr. Smallwood acquired a nationwide recognition of his ability to "badger Ottawa" for federal funds for roads, bridges, docks and what-not and then to claim credit for his provincial government.

"We've built 1,000 new schools," Mr. Smallwood said in an interview. "We've increased the number of teachers from 2,400 to 7,000. We built a university for 10,000 students. We established the best fisheries college in the world outside Japan. We've built 5,000 miles of roads. We've built nearly 2,000 miles of paving. When I became Premier, maybe 12 per cent to 15 per cent of the homes had indoor toilets. Now it's 75 per cent."







velop our resources and create jobs."

#### Controversy Over Plants

There is controversy over the job-creating capacities of such modern, mechanized plants. As the new Premier, Mr. Moors has promised to review, for example, the \$155-million oil refinery now under construction at Come By Chance at Placentia Bay.

"They may review such projects," said Mr. Smallwood, "but they won't cancel any of them — they are too good to cancel."

Mr. Smallwood, a dapper man with smooth gray hair and

shell-rimmed glasses who is fond of wide ties and colored shirts, had passed his 70th birthday and his sixth election victory when the time for a new campaign arrived last summer. Some advisers urged him not to seek re-election, but rather "retire gracefully with full honors." The Premier, sensing he might be accused of dodging his critics, dismissed the advice.

#### Worked in New York

Mr. Smallwood, who was born Dec. 24, 1900, in the eastern outport of Gambo, sought greener pastures as a journalist in New York City in the early nineteen-twenties. He became a reporter for The Socialist Call and later wrote for The New Leader, the Socialist party organ. In 1924 he campaigned in upstate New York for Norman Thomas, the Socialist candidate for president, learning along the way the campaign-oratory skills that later were to be described as "mesmeric."

He returned to Newfoundland just before the Depression to seek social and political reform for the colonists. He walked the length of Newfoundland's railway tracks some 500 miles organizing the railroaders. Then he entered politics to work for the union of Newfoundland and Canada. In 1948 he organized and managed the campaign leading to a referendum. His radio and platform addresses impressed on voters the advantages of getting Britain's "oldest colony," claimed for the Crown by John Cabot in 1497, out of the empire. The unionists won the 1949 referendum by a narrow margin.

The centennial edition (1967) of the official Canada Year Book acknowledged: "If it had not been for the persuasive powers of Joseph R. Smallwood, it is doubtful if Newfoundlanders would have voted in favor of confederation."

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